

Friday, November 19, 1993

The Hollywood Reporter

Cable review

'The End of Camelot'

By Irv Letofsky

The Discovery Channel has yet another version of "the events in Dallas" 30 years ago in a delicate, thoughtful, quite powerful documentary on the 72 hours surrounding the death of a too-brief epoch — "The End of Camelot."

Of course, that modern Camelot will never end in memory as long as there are the multiple miles of archival tapes and films of the last days of John Kennedy.

In this case, the story is told by footage knitted with a few incidental elements re-created to move the narrative, reflective comments from insiders and outsiders of the time, and fine musical touches by Barrington Pheloung.

The mix of color and black-and-white film and video qualities and textures from several archival sources gives the production an

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almost eerie touch. Credit editor Paul Carlin for piecing the puzzle together.

Among the dozens of sound biters are John Connally (the last interview before his death this summer); some Kennedy relatives, cabinet members and speech writers; Lyndon Johnson cronies; and Walter Cronkite.

The power comes from the careful assembly of the story and some of its minutiae, like White House correspondents Jack Bell of the Associated Press and Merriam Smith of United Press fighting over a telephone to be first with the "flash" (Smith won). Or the squawk in "Taps" at Arlington National Cemetery because the Marine honor guard on the trumpet was in tears.

THE END OF CAMELOT

Discovery Channel

Barrackpough Carey Production
in association with Discovery Networks
and Channel 4 Television

Producer George Carey
Director Steve Rugg
Editor Paul Carlin
Music composer-conductor Barrington Pheloung
Associate producer Bob Abeshouse
Executives in charge, Discovery Greg Moyer,
Tim Cowling

Airdates: Sunday, Nov. 21, 9-11 p.m.,
midnight-2 a.m.

THE LONG EMPTINESS

Death of JFK left us all with unfillable void

By DON SINGLETON

Daily News Staff Writer

It was an epic death, a tragedy on a global scale, and even now, 30 years after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the images remain, burned into the memories of all who lived through those days of emptiness.

Burned into memory...

The President and Jackie, in the back seat of the limousine, waving and smiling. The President slumping, mortally wounded. The First Lady in her pillbox hat, lurching in futile desperation toward a Secret Service man.

Lee Harvey Oswald, his features contorted in pain from the fatal bullet Jack Ruby has just fired into his gut, the shock of the moment engraved on the face of the Dallas police detective leading Oswald through the crowd.

Lyndon Johnson, taking the oath of office aboard Air Force One.

Jackie, wearing black, veiled in black, standing outside St. Matthew's Cathedral in Washington with Caroline and John-John, the little boy in short pants saluting his father's flag-draped coffin.

The riderless horse, walking across the bridge to Arlington.

The funeral procession with its phalanx of presidents and prime ministers and princes come to help the nation mourn its loss.

If you were alive then, and you were old enough to be aware of such things, you remember the moment when Camelot blinked off, and the world turned from Technicolor back to black and white. And gray.

You sat before the television set, long into the night, taking it in, watching as the endless line of mourners walked past the coffin in the Capitol rotunda.

Back then, before it happened, they were the fairy-tale family. They lived in the White House and the "Compound" at Hyannis on Cape Cod and in all the capitals of the world, igniting excitement wherever they walked.

It was a uniquely blessed, extended family, of brothers and sisters, the matriarch, movie-star in-laws, nieces and nephews, all playing volleyball and sailing at the Cape, their every move illuminated by flashbulbs and television lights, their smiling, tanned faces never disappearing the camera.

The murder of JFK, followed by the murder of his brother Robert Kennedy, took away the center, but even now the Kennedys retain a special place in the nation's consciousness, their faces regularly looking out from the pages of slick magazines and the celebrity columns of newspapers.

Shelley Sommer, director of public relations at the Kennedy Library Foundation in Boston, makes it her business to keep track of them.

"Well, Jackie is an editor at Doubleday," she said one day last week, "and John is a lawyer, he just left the Manhattan district attorney's office and he's between jobs, and Car-



THEN: John-John, flanked by his sister, Caroline, his mother, and uncles Robert and Teddy, salutes his father's coffin in 1963.



THEN: Still wearing the pink suit she had on when her husband was slain, Jacqueline Kennedy looks on as Lyndon B. Johnson is sworn in as President.

oline's an author of the best-selling 'In Our Own Defense' and a full-time mother of three kids in New York City.

"Robert Kennedy's oldest son, Joseph 2d, is a congressman who represents John's old district in Cambridge. Rose Kennedy is 103 years old and living in Hyannis. Ted is the senator, of course, and Patrick, his

son, is a state representative in Rhode Island, and another son, Ted Jr., just got married and lives in New Haven, and Kara is media director of Very Special Arts, in Washington.

"Of Bobby's 11 children, 10 are still living. A daughter, Kerry Kennedy Cuomo — she's married to Andrew Cuomo — runs the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Center, and



NOW: JFK Jr. relaxes on the Great Lawn in Central Park after a game of touch football.



NOW: Happy grandmother Jackie Kennedy Onassis holds granddaughter Natasha Schlossberg at the carousel in Central Park.

a son, Michael, lives in Boston and runs a company called Citizens Energy.

"Sargent Shriver and Eunice Shriver are both alive — she's still very much involved in the functioning of the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Memorial Foundation, and he's active in the Special Olympics. Jean Kennedy Smith is ambassador to Ireland."

Not to mention Maria Shriver, who is a correspondent for NBC and married to Arnold Schwarzenegger. And then there were the extras, from the early Kennedy administration. Jack Valenti, president of the Motion Picture Association of America. Ted Sorensen, a lawyer in Manhattan.

Familiar faces all, comforting presences in our lives. But having them there still doesn't fill the void left by that awful death in Dallas, 30 short years ago.

THE DAY WE WEPT: The death of

John F. Kennedy is etched in the memories of all Americans who lived through that tragedy 30 years ago tomorrow. Inside today's paper you will find a special reprinted edition of the Daily News of Nov. 23, 1963. If you want an additional souvenir copy of that day's complete newspaper, send a stamped (75 cents postage), self-addressed 8½-by-11 envelope to: The Daily News, 220 E. 42d St., New York, N.Y. 10017, Attn: Kennedy Reprint.

TV review

'Who Killed JFK'

By Miles Beller

Thirty years having passed since John F. Kennedy's assassination, the legend and lore of what happened that bright Dallas day intensifies with unbridled zeal.

And into the breach comes CBS Reports' "Who Killed JFK, the Final Chapter?" Yet despite the title suggestion, this broadcast serves more as broad-based overview, surveying matters before, during

and after the assassination. In this regard, we get a conspiracy theory roundup, perusing the various assertions and claims born over the decades.

Anchor Dan Rather, who reported JFK's fateful visit to Dallas in 1963 and the way it came to grief that November day, does a competent job of shepherding us through events and theories regarding

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what Rather calls "the greatest murder mystery of the century." Included in the two-hour telecast are archival clips, historic photos and interviews with those who knew Kennedy.

Also heard from are former officials of the CIA and KGB and those familiar with Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby. Moreover, the conspiracy experts state their charges, each citing a wide range of suspects — the Soviets, CIA, Mafia and Castro — as responsible for the killing.

Material touting "Who Killed JFK?" says the show "... provides fresh clues and new and final answers to who shot President Ken-

CBS REPORTS: WHO KILLED JFK, THE FINAL CHAPTER?

CBS
CBS News

Executive producer..... Linda Mason
Senior producer..... Steve Glauber
Producer/editor..... Terry Manning
Anchor: Dan Rather

Airdate: Friday, Nov. 19, 9-11 p.m.

nedy and who was behind it." Quite so, the program does quickly go through the evidence, offering an expeditious swing through the conspiracy supermarket.

At show's finish, Rather ends by declaring that, as the facts now stand, no one can prove Oswald was not the sole person responsible for the president's death. Indeed, taken in its entirety, "Who Killed JFK?" is more valuable for its overview than as obiter dictum on who shot Kennedy. □

TV review

'JFK: Reckless Youth'

By Miles Beller

A president radiating an aura of movie-star sexiness and rock-singer magnetism, John F. Kennedy yet reigns as supreme icon, the martyred politician whose death ended a "vigorous" age when youth and physical stamina were chief virtues.

And with ABC's "JFK: Reckless Youth," based on the first volume of Nigel Hamilton's planned three-volume work chronicling Kennedy's life, JFK's formative years are extruded through the screenwri-

ter's template and turned into an exaggerated miniseries.

In this regard we get JFK as a bold but sickly small boy, quickly advanced to his young manhood, a role played fully and at times convincingly by Patrick Dempsey, showing us an energetic Boston Brahmin who lives impetuously, without regard to consequence. Yet what does defeat "Reckless Youth" is inartful screenwriting, scripting running from silly to stilted.

In its maladroitness manner, "Reck-

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'Reckless'

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less Youth" shuttles through Kennedy's early years, catching him as boy-man out for a good time and adventure. So we bear witness to his school escapades and dalliances with the ladies, in particular a heated romance with journalist Inga Arvad (Yolanda Jilot).

We meet those in the Kennedy brood, including fair-haired brother Joe Jr. (Loren Dean), patriarch Joe (Terry Kinney) and matriarch Rose (Diana Scarwid).

History as docudrama bravado, biography as one hokey defining "moment" after another linked by edits and cuts self-consciously clicking across the small-screen, "JFK: Reckless Youth" is best tak-

JFK: RECKLESS YOUTH ABC

The Polone Co.

in association with Hearst Entertainment

Executive producer.....Judith A. Polone
Co-producer.....Dennis Stuart Murphy
Producer.....Harry Winer
Director.....Harry Winer
Based on the book by.....Nigel Hamilton
Teleplay.....William Broyles
Music.....Cameron Allan
Production designer.....Armin Ganz
Editor.....David Simmons, John A. Barton
Director of photography.....Jean Lepine
Cast: Patrick Dempsey, Terry Kinney, Loren Dean,
Yolanda Jilot, Diana Scarwid, Robin Tunney, Andrew
Lowrey, Stan Cahill, Claire Forlani, Malachy
McCort, James Rebhorn

Airdates: Sunday, Nov. 21, 9-11 p.m. (Part I);
Tuesday, Nov. 23, 9-11 p.m. (Part II)

en as dubious video interpretation of a life. For screenwriter William Broyles renders portraiture as sloppy miniature, packing all the emotional involvement of a crudely fashioned paint-by-numbers scene. □